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Hochman et al.

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(54) **OLED DISPLAY MODULES FOR
LARGE-FORMAT OLED DISPLAYS**

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- (71) Applicant: **Revolution Display, LLC**, Glendale, CA (US)
- (72) Inventors: **Jeremy Hochman**, Glendale, CA (US);
Robbie Thielemans, Nazareth (BE)
- (73) Assignee: **Revolution Display, LLC**, Glendale, CA (US)

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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- G09G 3/20** (2006.01)
- H01L 27/32** (2006.01)
- H01L 51/56** (2006.01)

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CPC **G09G 3/3208** (2013.01); **G09G 3/2003** (2013.01); **G09G 3/3216** (2013.01); **H01L 27/3218** (2013.01); **H01L 51/56** (2013.01); **G09G 2300/026** (2013.01); **G09G 2300/0443** (2013.01); **G09G 2300/0452** (2013.01); **H01L 2227/323** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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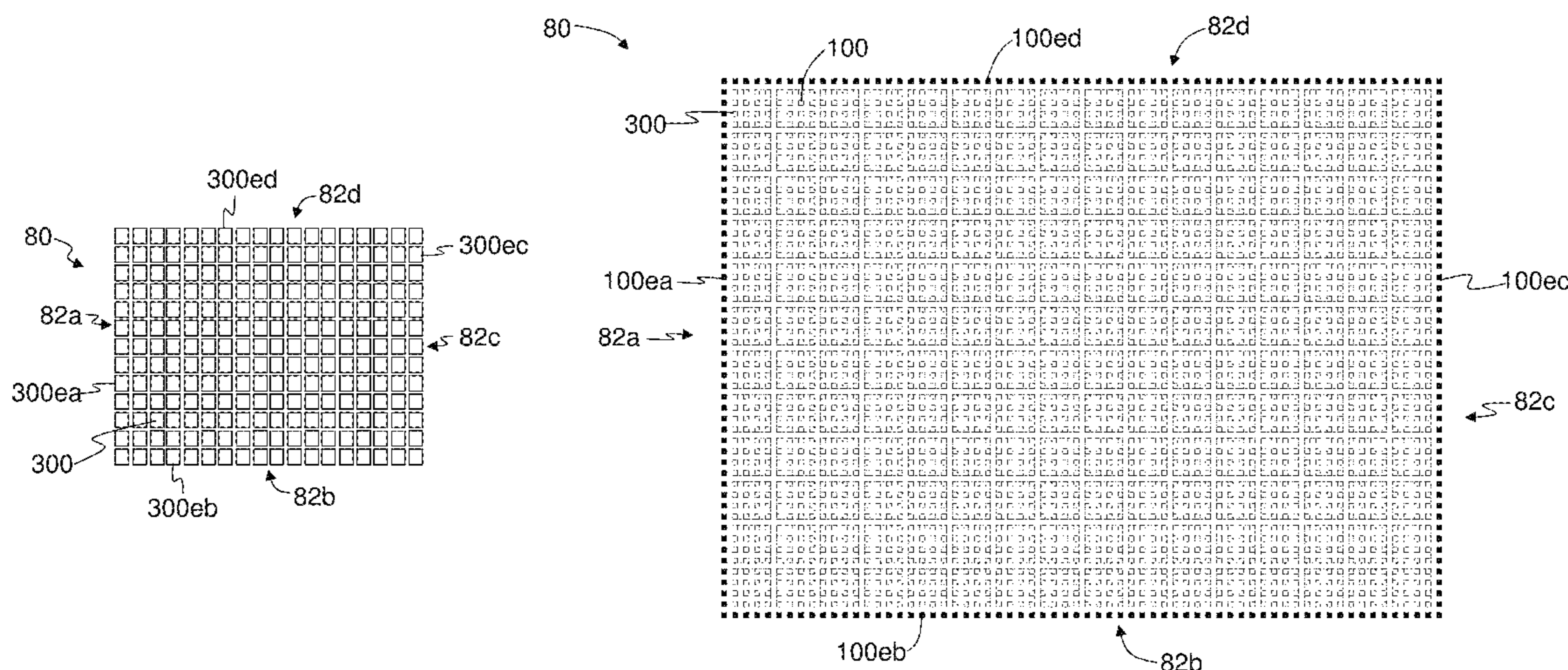
Primary Examiner — Shaheda Abdin

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

OLED display modules for large-format displays are disclosed. The OLED display module includes a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode, and an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix. Groups of adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and groups of adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an array of four or more OLEDs, wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated. The modules can be combined to form the large-format display.

24 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



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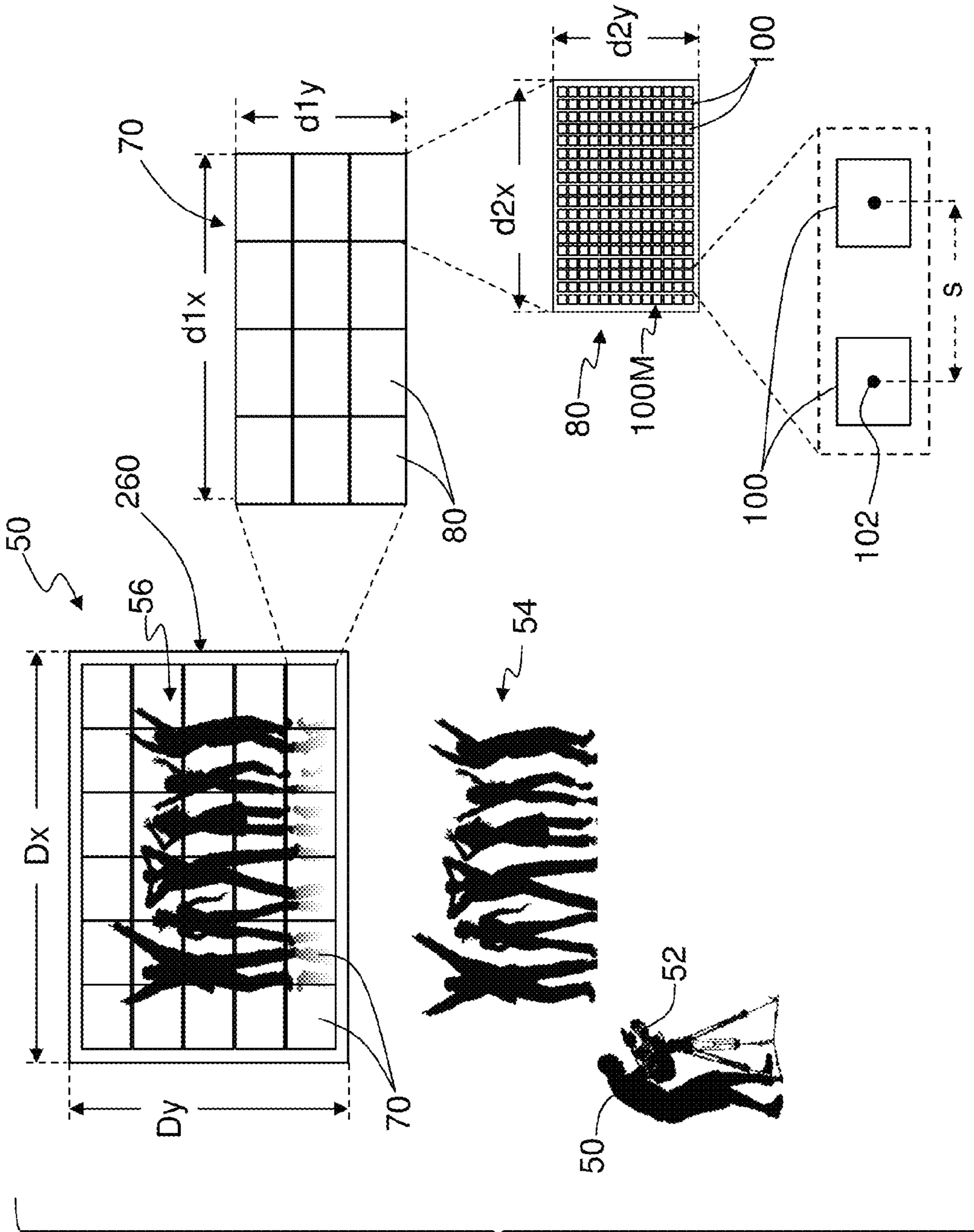


FIG. 1

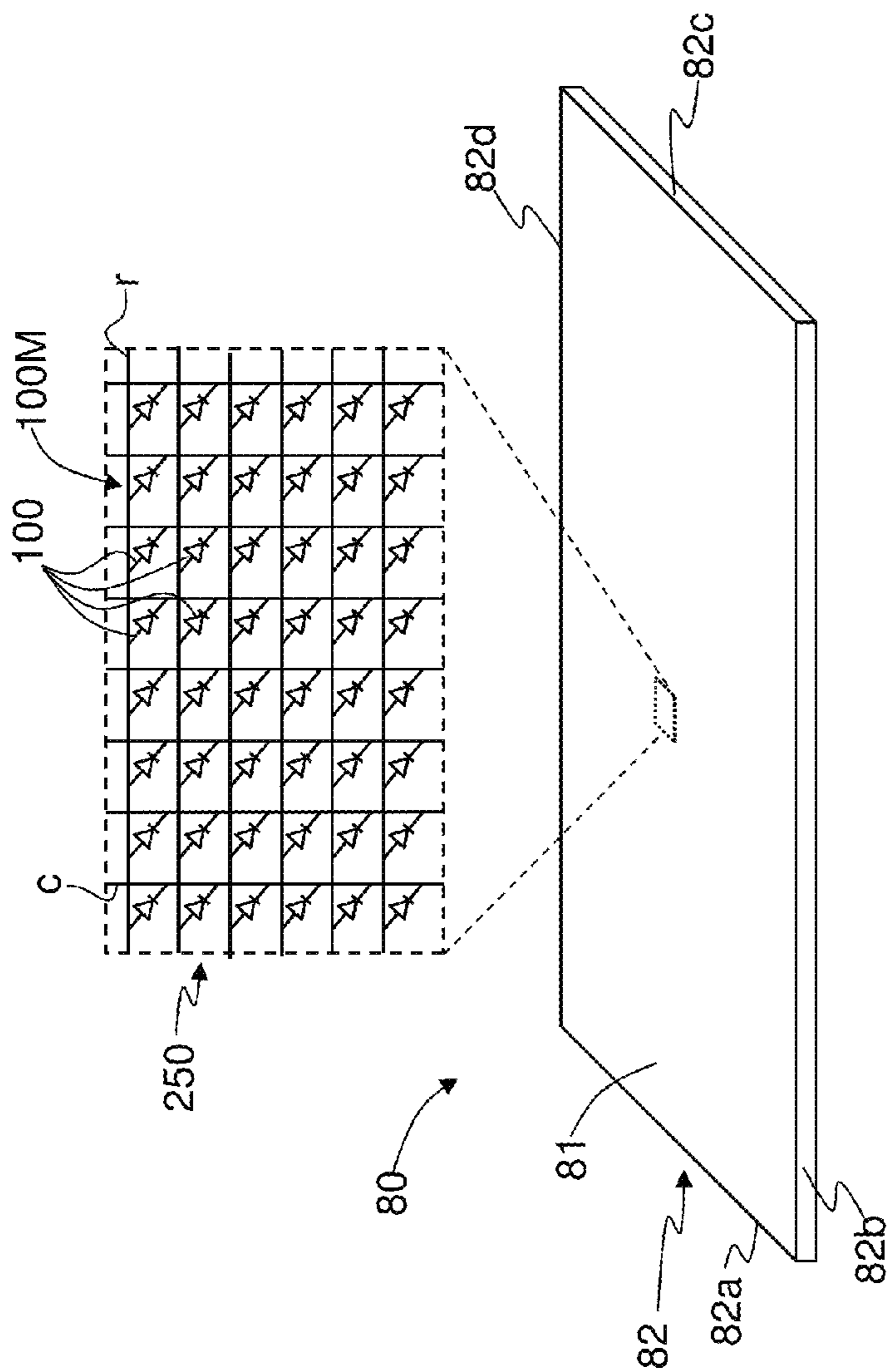


FIG. 2A

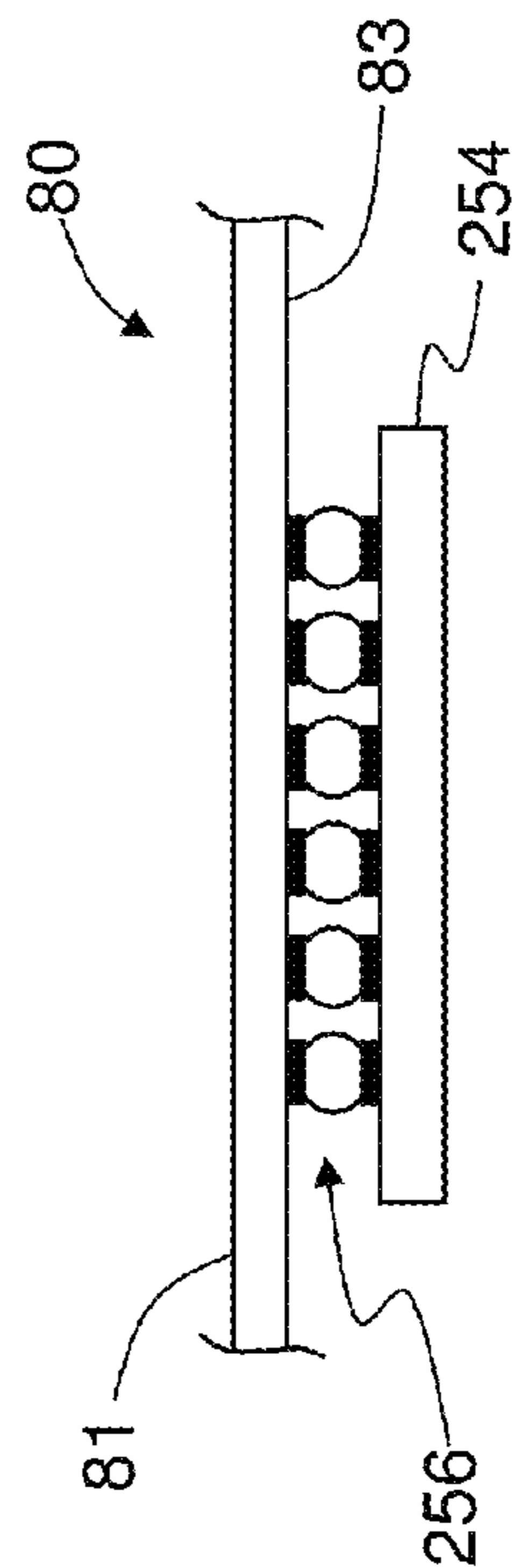
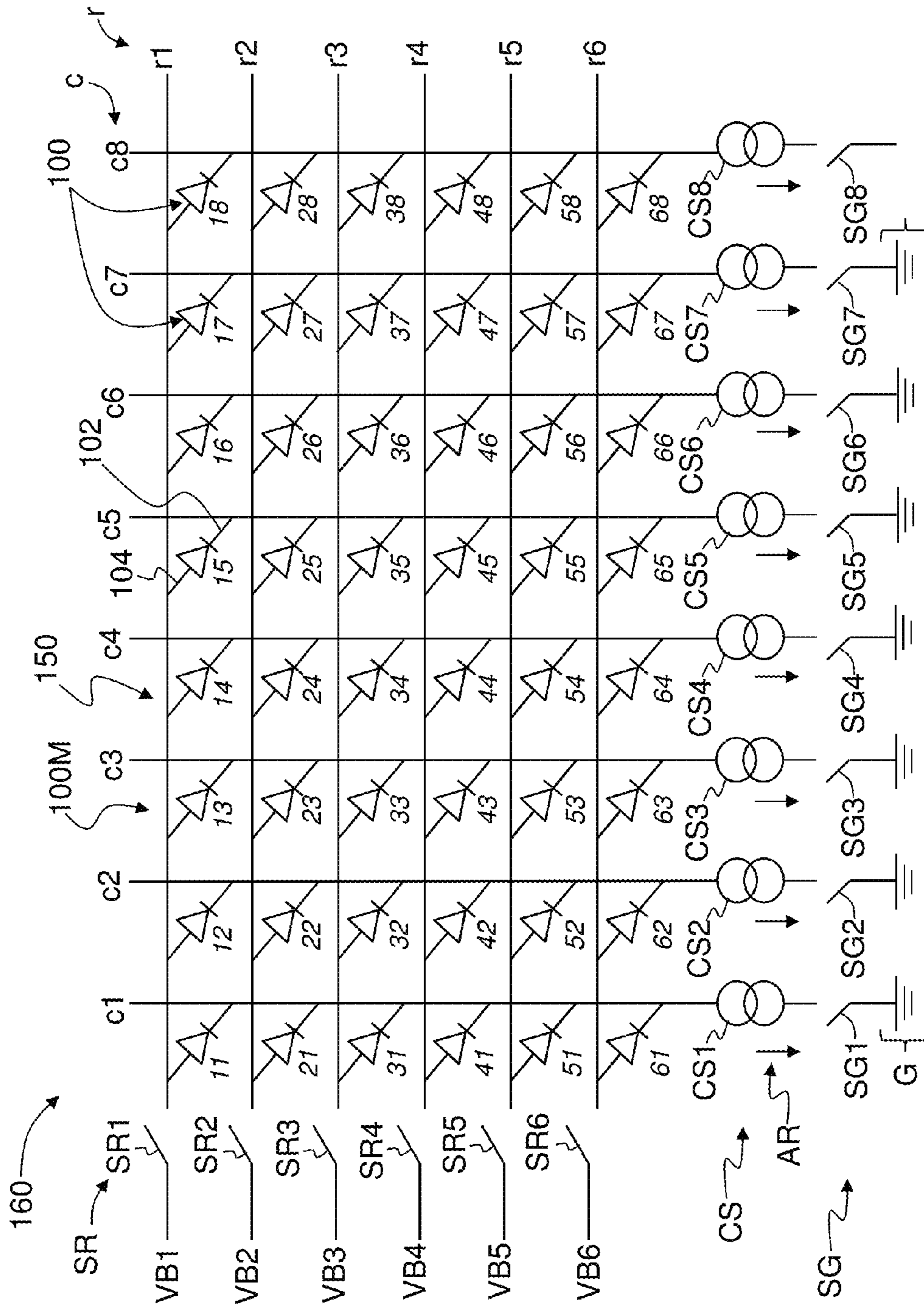


FIG. 2B



Prior Art

FIG. 3

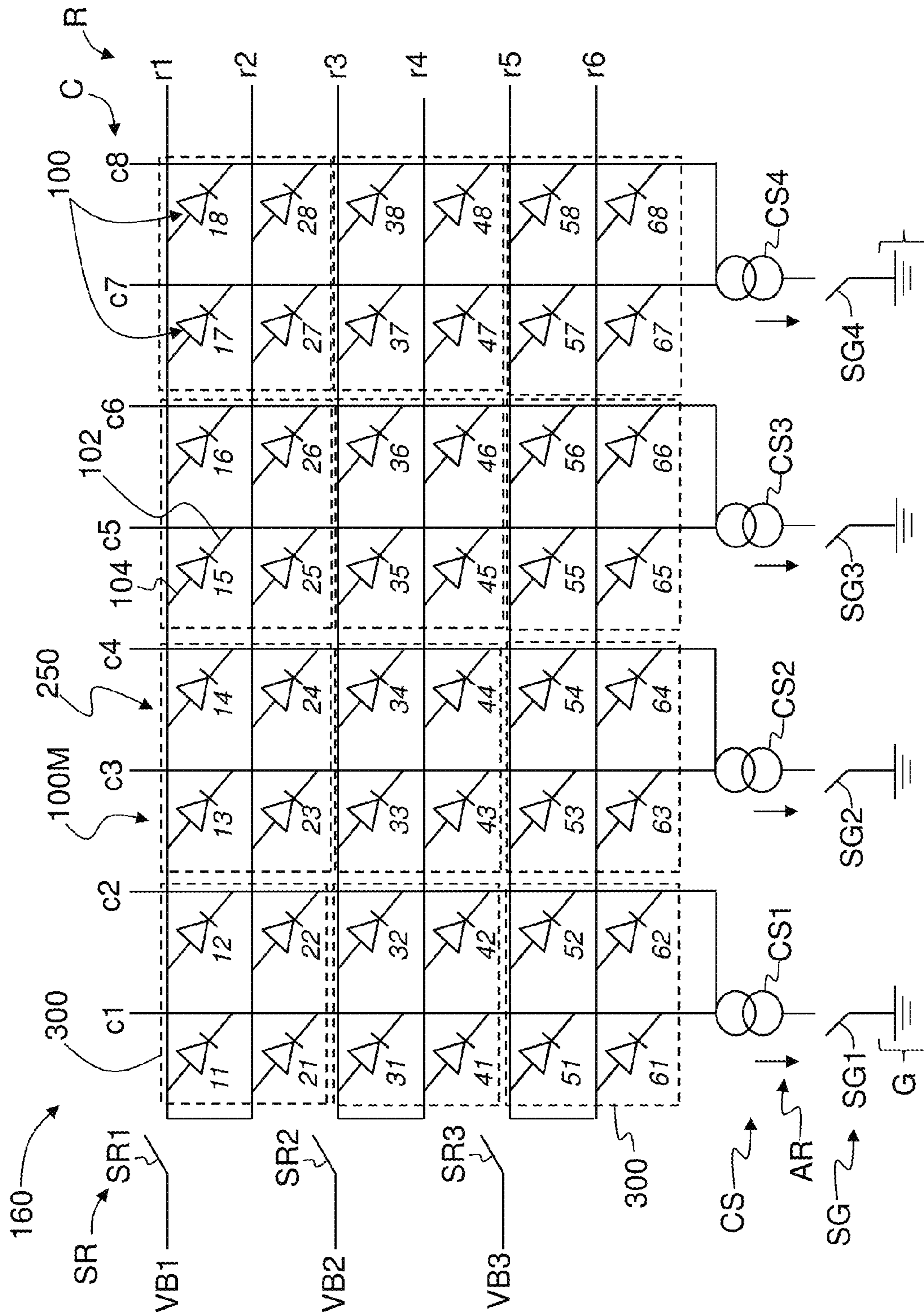


FIG. 4A

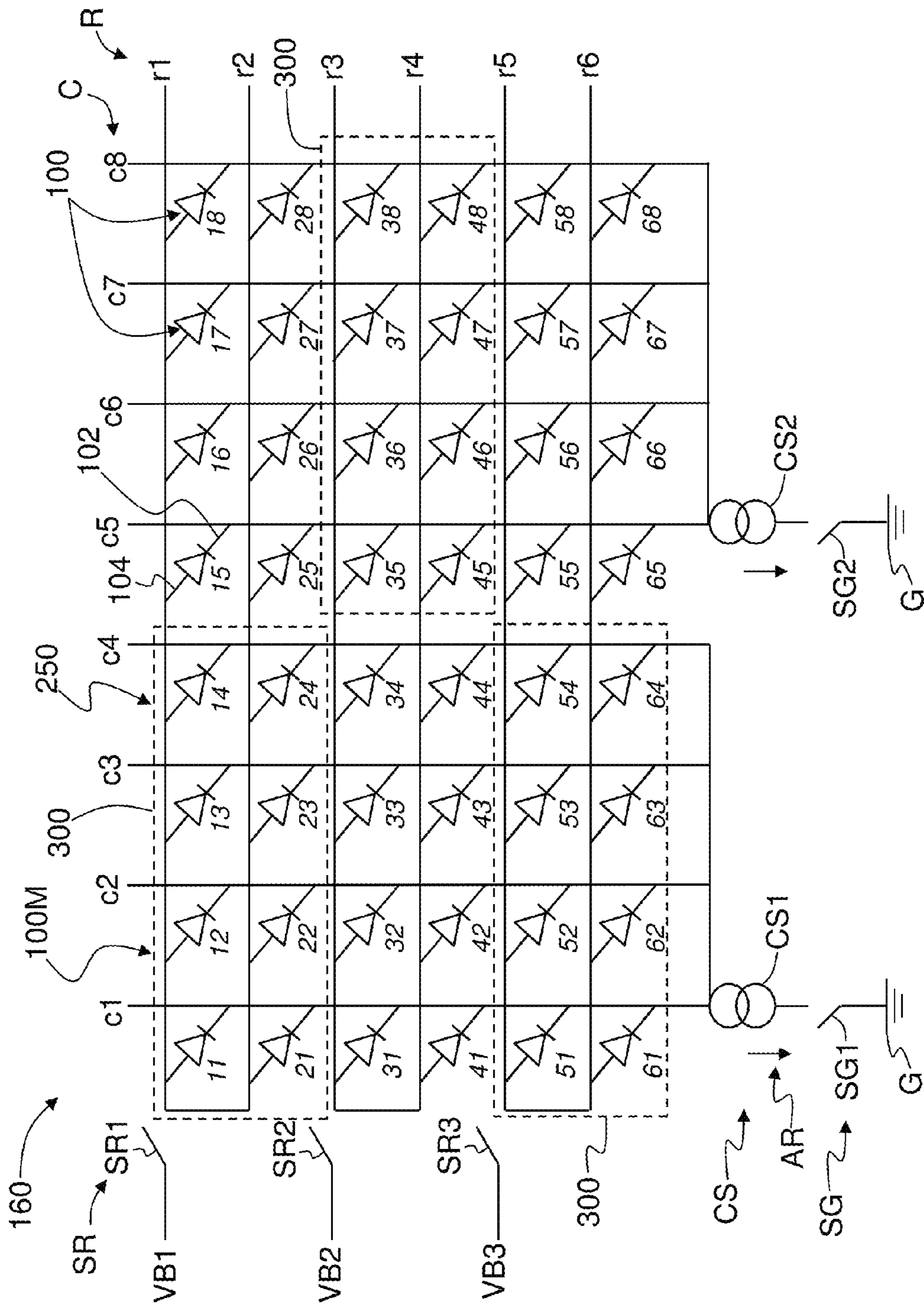


FIG. 4B

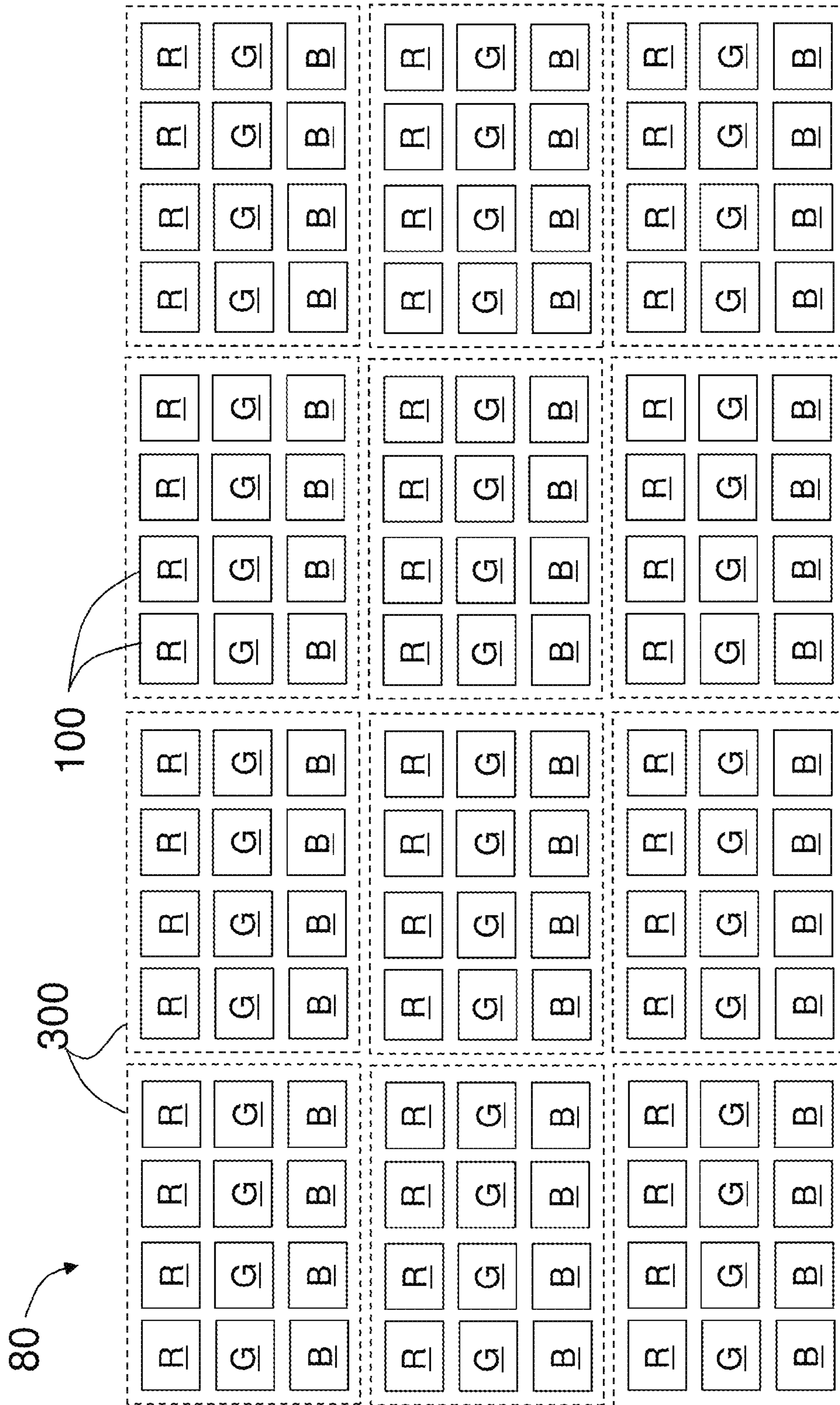


FIG. 5

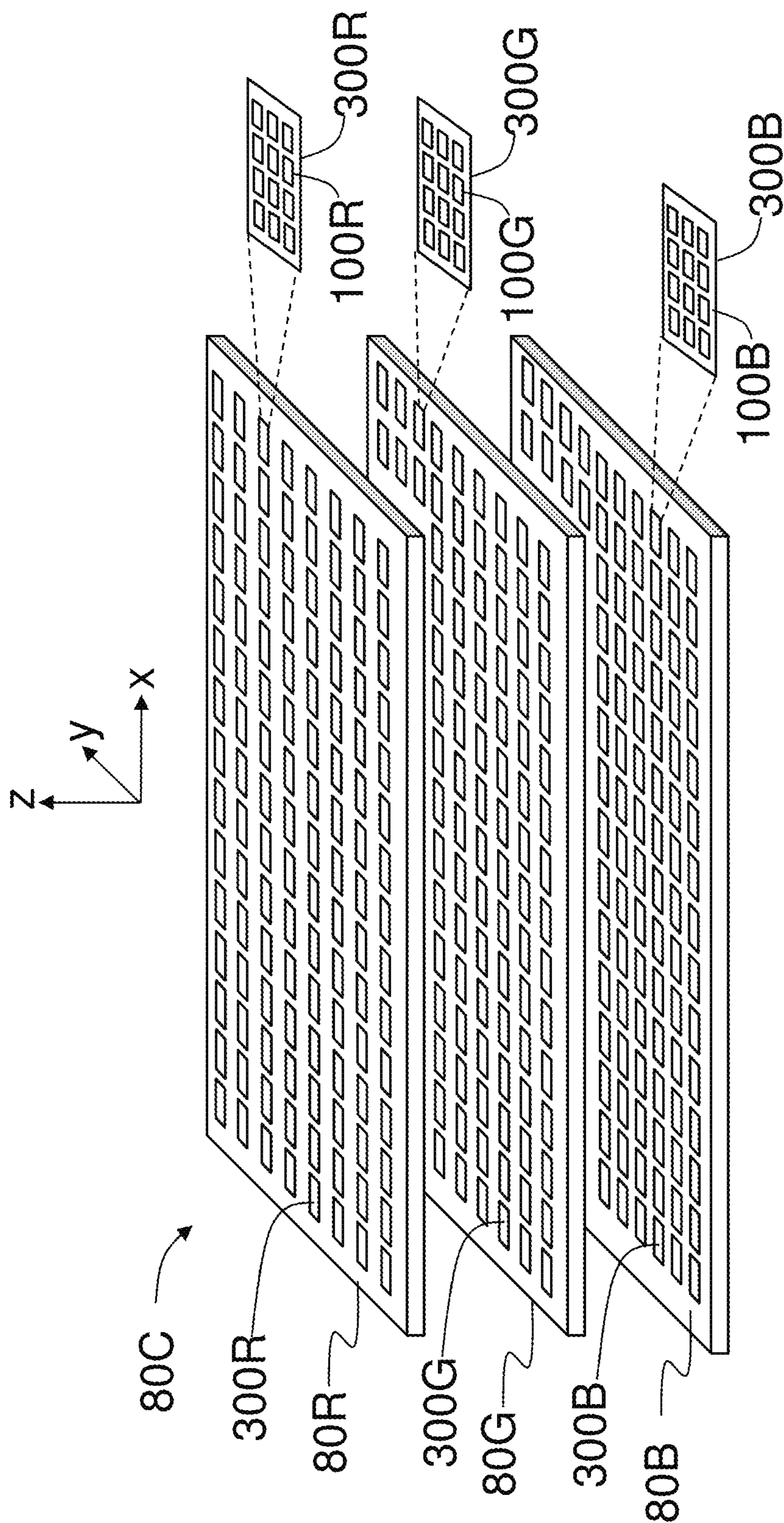


FIG. 6A

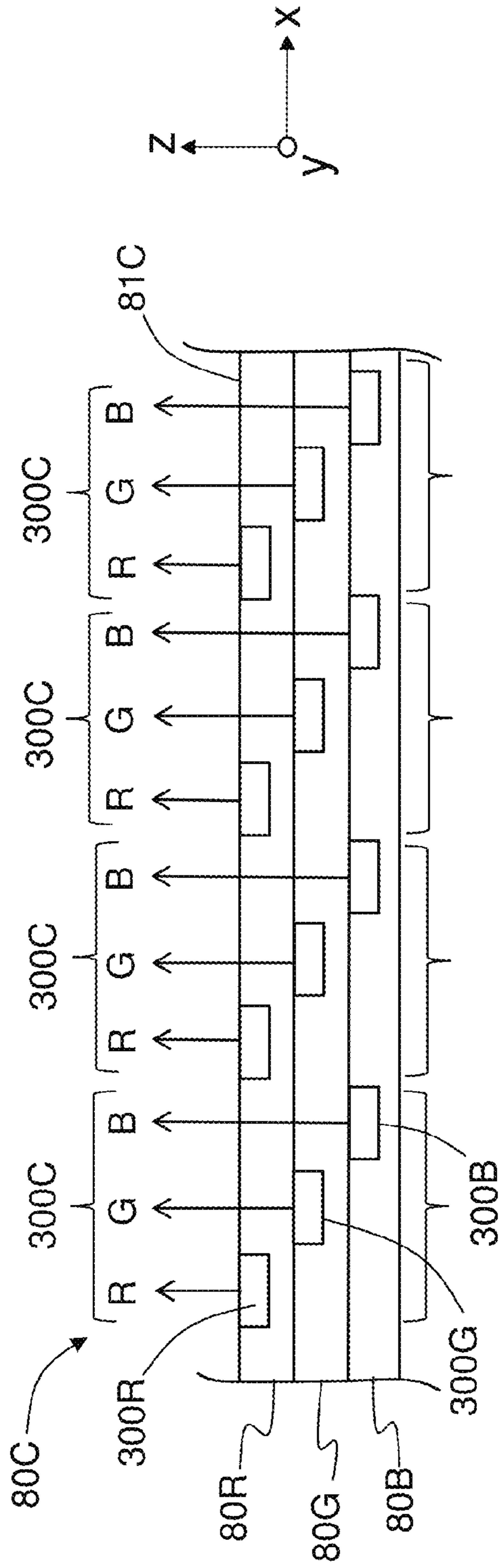


FIG. 6B

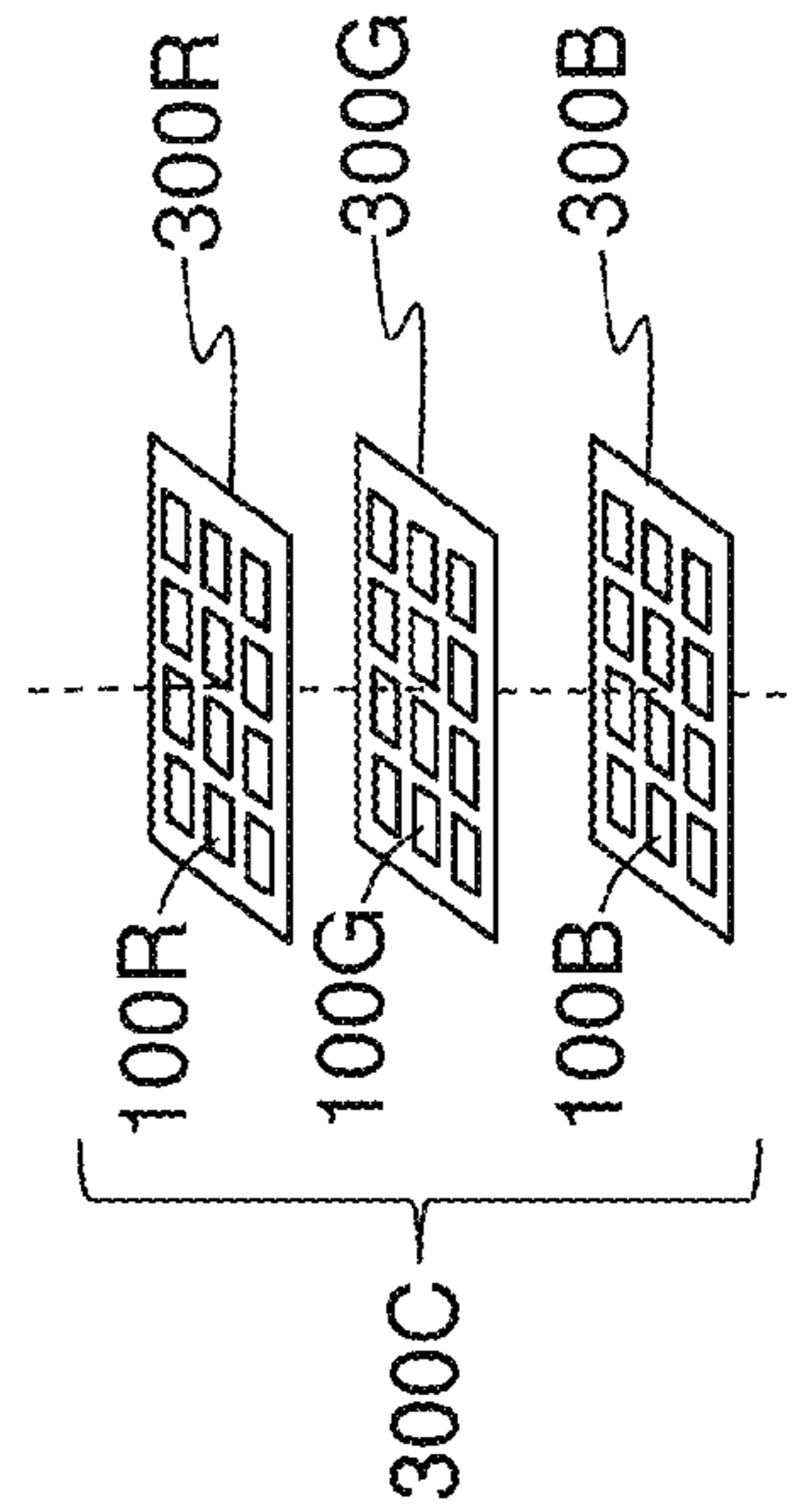


FIG. 6C

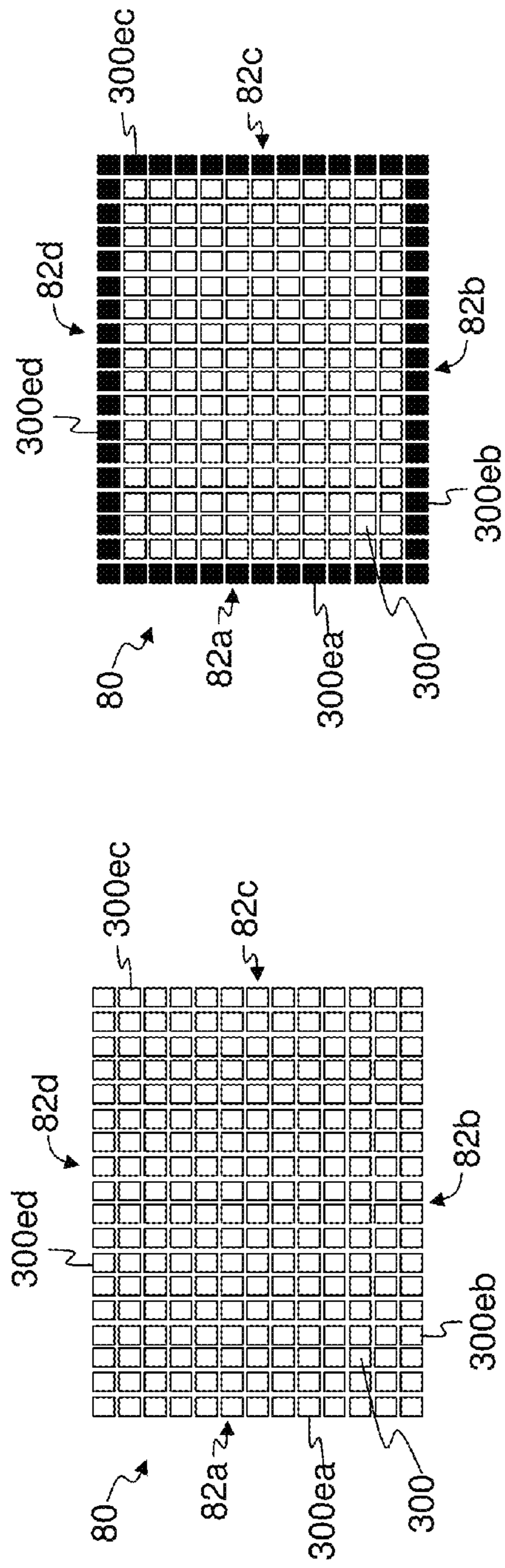


FIG. 7B

FIG. 7A

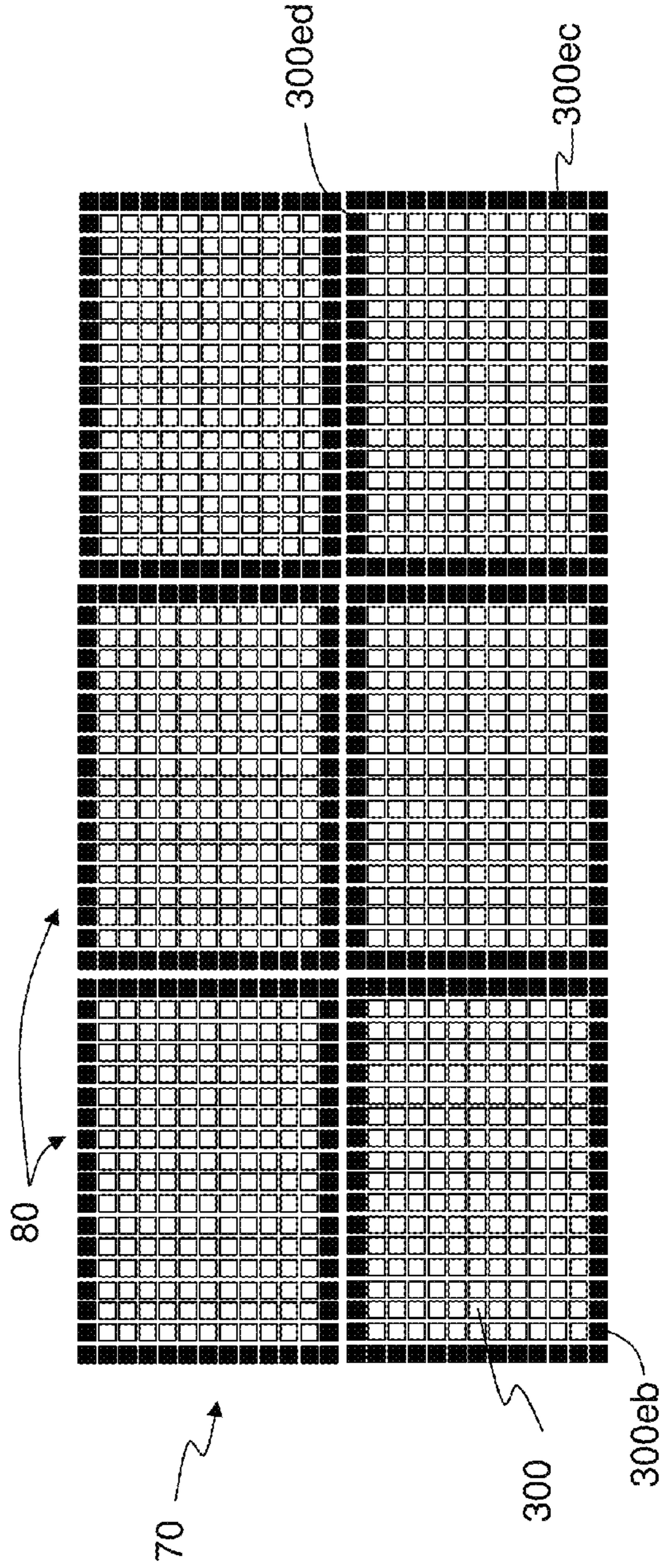


FIG. 7C

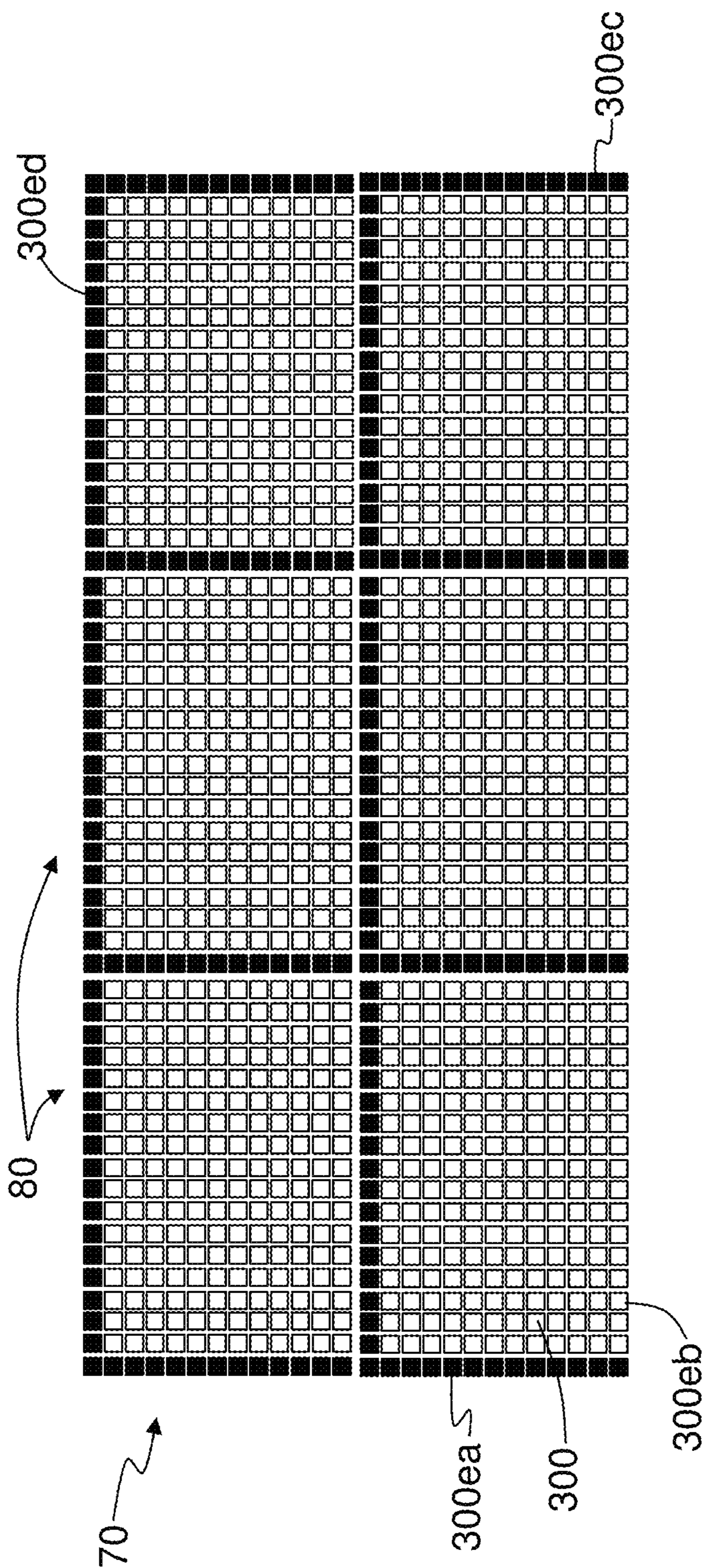


FIG. 7D

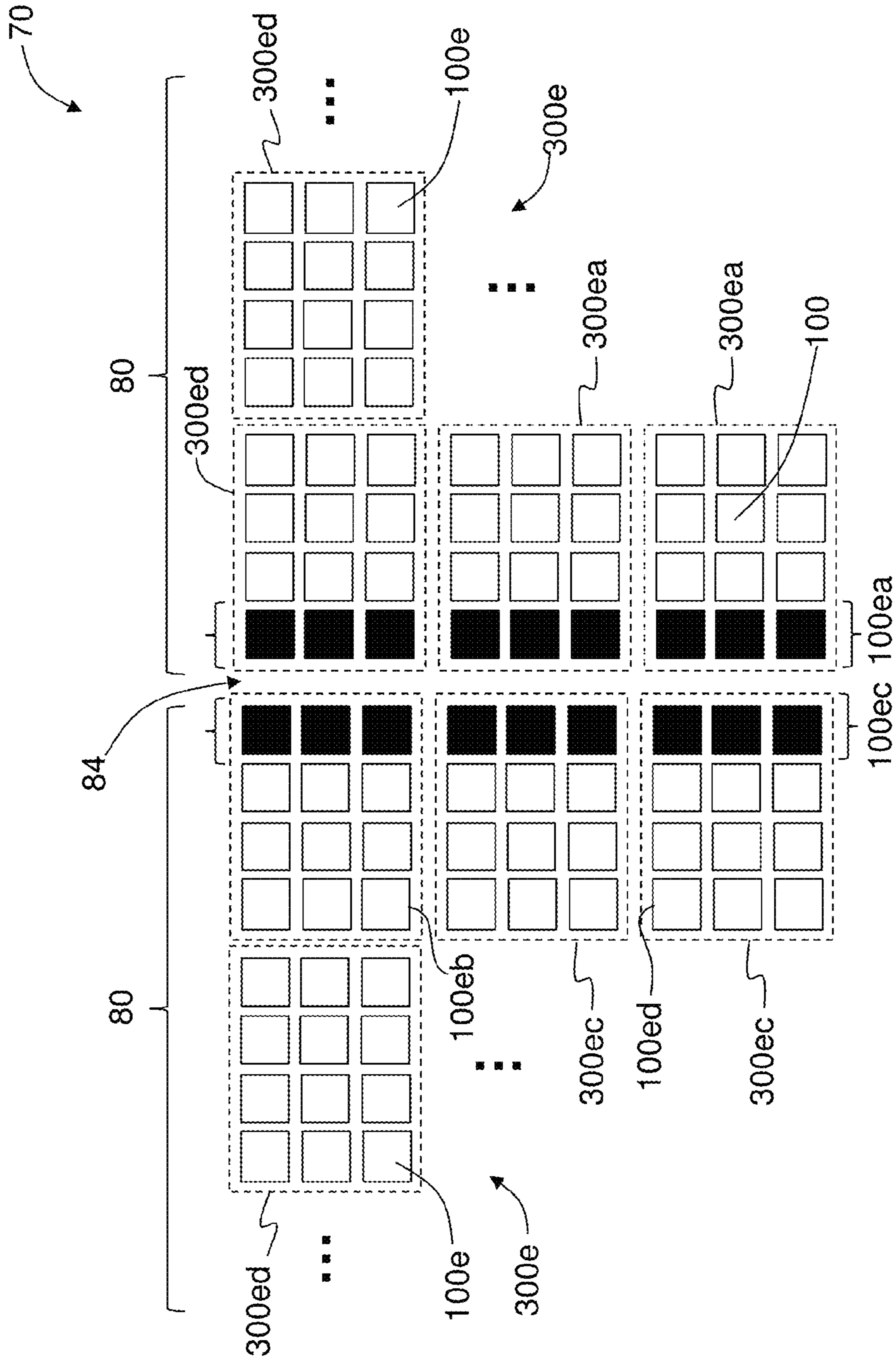


FIG. 8A

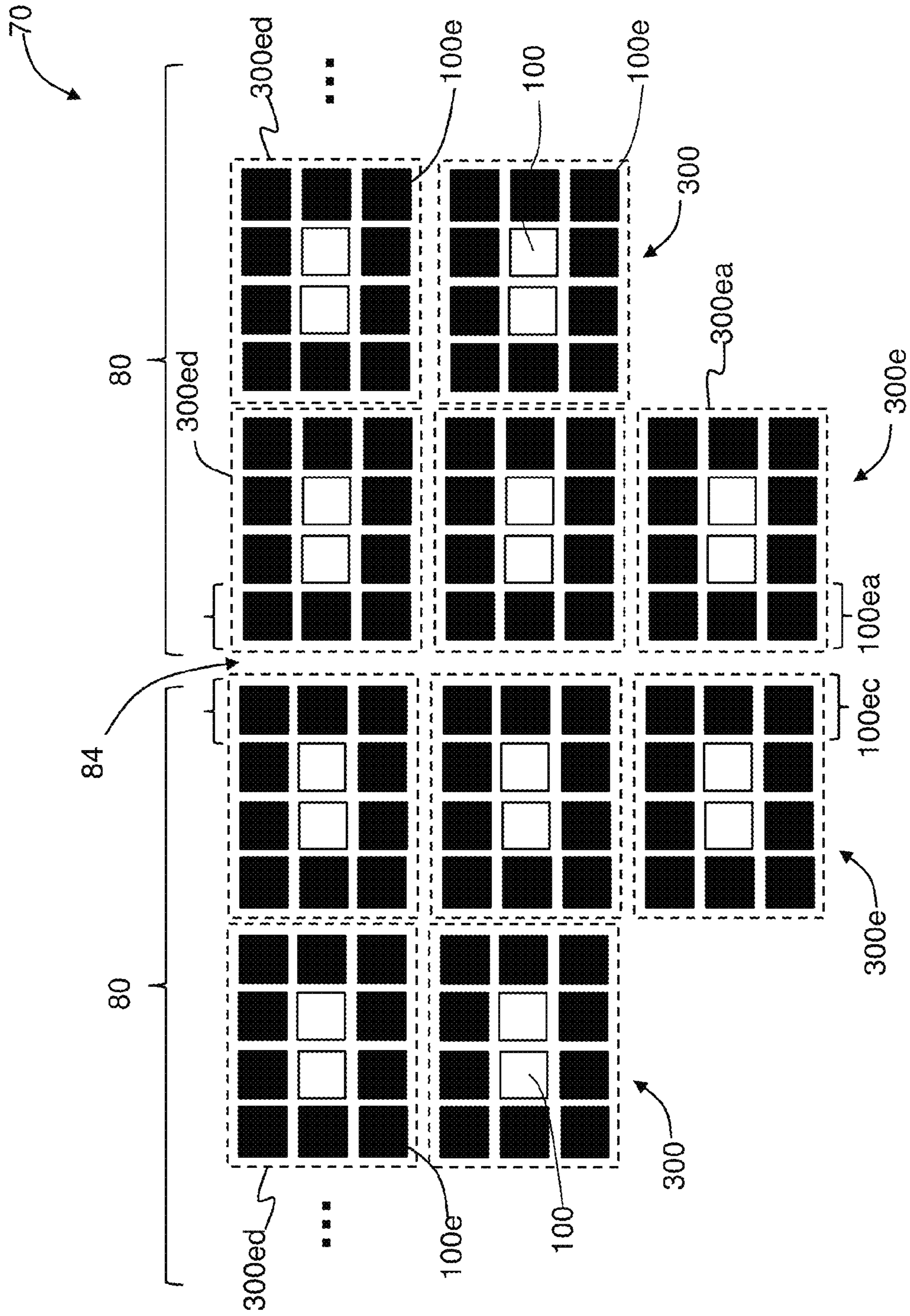


FIG. 8B

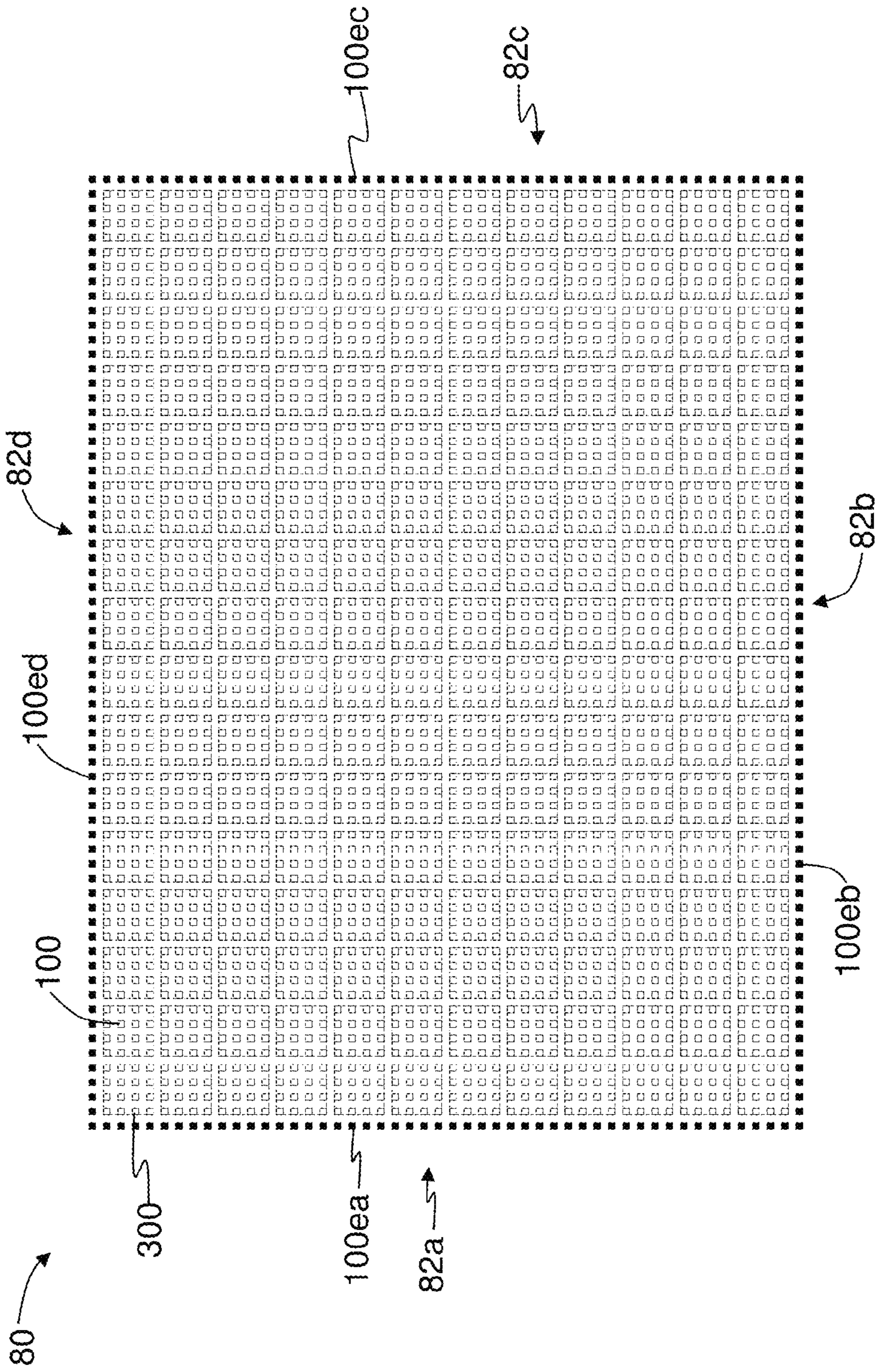


FIG. 9A

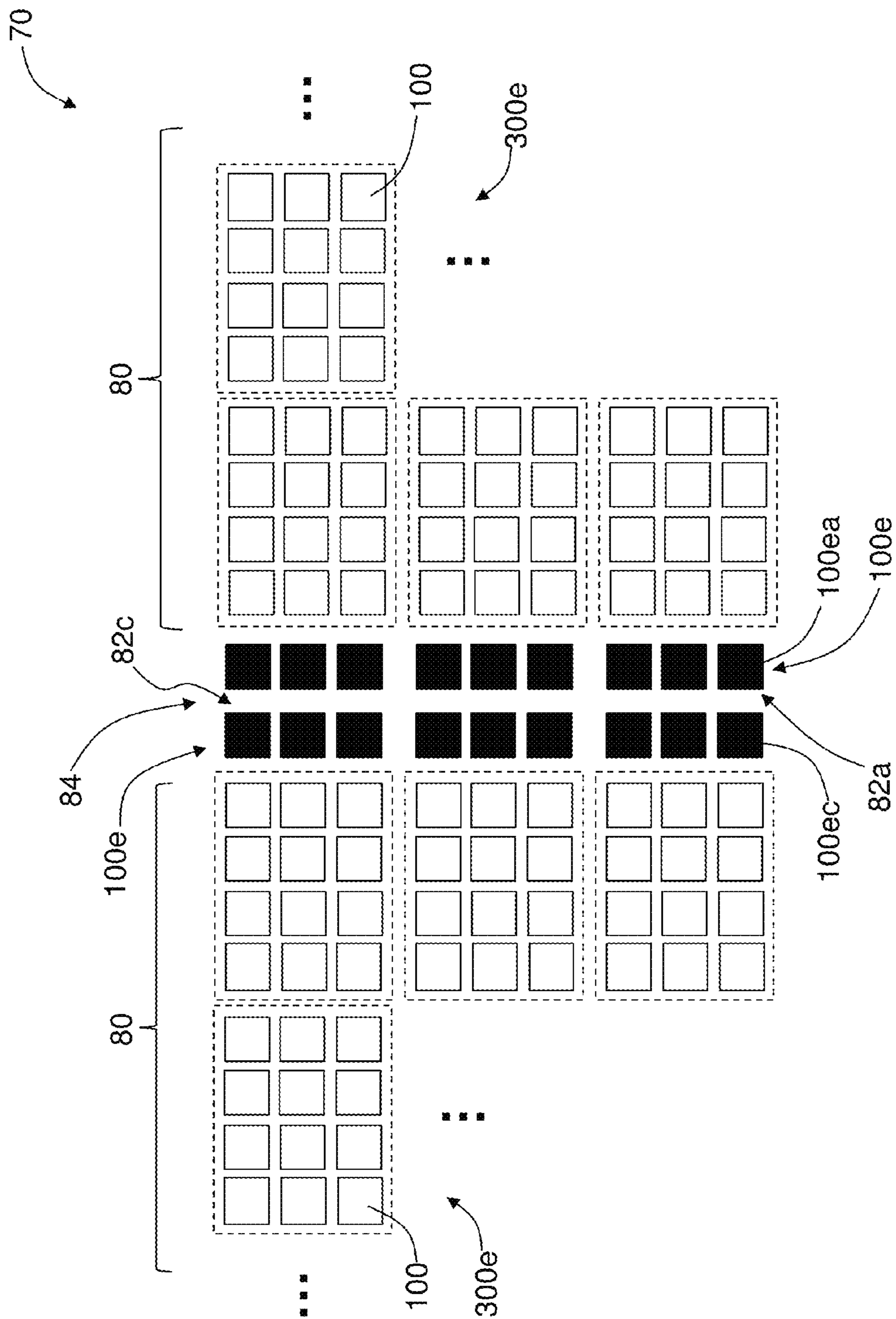


FIG. 9B

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**OLED DISPLAY MODULES FOR
LARGE-FORMAT OLED DISPLAYS**

FIELD

The present disclosure relates to organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) and OLED displays, and in particular relates to OLED display modules for large-format OLED displays.

The entire disclosure of any publication or patent document mentioned herein is incorporated by reference, including US 2004/0207315, entitled "Organic light-emitting diode display assembly for use in a large-screen display application," and US 2005/0017922, entitled "Method for controlling an organic light-emitting diode display, and display applying this method."

BACKGROUND

Organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs) utilize a layer of organic luminescent material that, when sandwiched between electrodes and subjected to a DC electric current, produces light of a variety of colors (wavelengths). These OLED structures can be combined into picture elements or "pixels" to form an OLED display. OLEDs are also useful in a variety of applications as discrete light-emitting devices or as the active element of light-emitting arrays or displays, such as flat-panel displays in watches, telephones, laptop computers, pagers, cellular phones, calculators, and the like. To date, the use of OLEDs to form light-emitting arrays or displays has been largely limited to small-screen applications such as those mentioned above.

Demands for large-format displays having higher quality and higher resolution have led the industry to turn to alternative display technologies to replace older LED and liquid crystal displays (LCDs). For example, LCDs fail to provide the bright, high light output, larger viewing angles, and high resolution and speed requirements that the large-format display market demands. Another drawback of conventional LCD's is the fact that the driving interconnections are made from the sides, which precludes efficient tiling of LCD-based display modules. By contrast, OLEDs promise bright, vivid colors in high resolution and at wider viewing angles and so are an appealing option as light sources for large-format displays, such as outdoor or indoor stadium displays, large marketing advertisement displays, and mass-public informational displays.

To date, the use of OLED technology in large-format displays has largely relied upon the same technology used for smaller OLED displays. While this approach is simple and generally sensible, it can also be relatively expensive and not always optimal for the given application.

SUMMARY

An aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module that includes: a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode; an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix; and wherein groups of i adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of j adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an $i \times j$ array of OLEDs, wherein i and j are integers equal to or greater than 2, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated.

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Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-anode configuration, with each column including a current sink and a column switch and each row including a voltage input and a row switch.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein the OLEDs in the matrix of OLEDs emit light of substantially the same wavelength.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein different OLEDs within a given super pixel emit one of a plurality of different colors of light.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein respective OLEDs within a given super pixel emit one of red, green or blue light.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein the colors of light include two or more of red, green, blue, yellow, white, orange, magenta and cyan.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein some of the super pixels are edge super pixels, and wherein at least some of the edge super pixels are inactive.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein some of the super pixels have edge sub-pixels, and wherein one or more of the edge sub-pixels are inactive.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein each of the edge sub-pixels in each super pixel is inactive.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, further including a circuit controller electrically connected to the rows and columns.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein the circuit controller is electrically connected to the rows and columns via a ball-grid-array (BGA) structure.

Another aspect of the disclosure is large-format OLED display that includes a plurality of the OLED display modules as described above, and one or more panels, with each panel operably supporting one or more of the modules.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the large-format OLED display as described above, wherein the OLED display modules are color modules.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image. The method includes: providing a matrix of organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs); electrically connecting the OLEDs in the matrix of OLEDs to define an OLED display having super pixels, wherein each super pixel includes a group of four or more OLEDs and wherein the OLEDs in each super pixel cannot be activated individually; providing a video signal representative of the display image to the OLED display; and displaying the display image on the OLED display using the super pixels.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the method of displaying a large-format display image as described above, including providing the matrix of OLEDs in multiple modules, and forming the OLED display from the multiple modules.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image, wherein different OLEDs within a given super pixel emit one of a plurality of different colors of light.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image, wherein respective OLEDs within a given super pixel emit one of red, green or blue light.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image, wherein the colors of light include red, green, blue, yellow, white, orange, magenta and cyan.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image, wherein some of the super pixels are edge super pixels, and wherein at least some of the edge super pixels are inactive.

Another aspect of the disclosure is a method of displaying a large-format display image, wherein the matrix of OLED are electrically connected in either a common-anode configuration or a common-cathode configuration.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module that includes: a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode, wherein some of the OLEDs constitute edge OLEDs; an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix wherein at least some of the edge OLEDs are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit; and wherein groups of adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an array of at least four OLEDs, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated.

Another aspect of the disclosure is the OLED display module as described above, wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-anode configuration, with each column including a current sink and a column switch and each row including a voltage input and a row switch.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-cathode configuration.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein all of the edge OLEDs are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit and are not included in any of the super pixels.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein the module includes four edges, and wherein all of the edge OLEDs that reside along at least one of the four edges of the module are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein different OLEDs within a given super pixel emit one of a plurality of different colors of light.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein the different colors of light include two or more of red, green, blue, yellow, white, orange, magenta and cyan.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein each super pixel includes edge sub pixels, and wherein at least some of the edge sub pixels in each super pixel are inactive.

Another aspect of the disclosure is an OLED display module as described above, wherein all of the edge sub pixels in each super pixel are inactive.

An advantage of the modules disclosed herein is that the cost of the control electronics is proportional to the display resolution desired and not to the display's highest possible resolution as defined by the OLED matrix. By taking advantage of the physics of combining individual OLEDs on a common device, the amount of drive electronics is reduced

and in example can be optimized (i.e., minimized). This is important because when the cost of the drive electronics is based on the highest possible resolution of the device as defined by the OLED matrix and not on the resolution of the final display as defined by super pixels, large-format displays become extremely expensive to the point of being uneconomical.

Additional features and advantages are set forth in the Detailed Description that follows, and in part will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art from the description or recognized by practicing the embodiments as described in the written description and claims hereof, as well as the appended drawings. It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following Detailed Description are merely exemplary and are intended to provide an overview or framework to understand the nature and character of the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings are included to provide a further understanding and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification. The drawings illustrate one or more embodiment(s), and together with the Detailed Description serve to explain principles and operation of the various embodiments. As such, the disclosure will become more fully understood from the following Detailed Description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying Figures, in which:

FIG. 1 shows an example large-format display system that includes a large-format OLED display that displays an image of people dancing as captured by a video camera, with the close-up insets showing increasingly higher resolution details of the large-format display screen, all the way down to the individual OLEDs;

FIG. 2A is a schematic diagram of an example module and shows in the close-up inset a portion of the OLED drive circuit;

FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional view of the example module of FIG. 2A and illustrates an example that includes a circuit controller electrically connected to the row-and-column electrical connections using a ball-grid-array (BGA) structure;

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram of a conventional OLED display made up of an array of OLEDs electrically connected using a conventional common-anode OLED drive circuit wherein all the OLEDs are individually addressable and define pixels of the display;

FIG. 4A is a schematic diagram of an example OLED display according to the disclosure that includes an array of OLEDs electrically connected in a common-anode drive-circuit configuration wherein select groups of 2x2 OLEDs are addressable, and wherein the select groups constitute super pixels for the display;

FIG. 4B is similar to FIG. 4A, but wherein the super pixels are constituted by select groups of 2x4 OLEDs;

FIG. 5 is a front-on view of an example module of a display panel, wherein the module is made up of an array of 4x3 super pixels, each super pixel including red (R), green (G) and blue (B) OLEDs;

FIG. 6A is an elevated exploded view of an example color OLED module that shows R, G and B monochrome modules arranged in a layered configuration;

FIG. 6B is a close-up cross-sectional view of a portion of the example color module of FIG. 6A;

FIG. 6C is an elevated, exploded view of an example color super pixel of the color module of FIGS. 6A and 6B;

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FIGS. 7A through 7D illustrate example embodiments wherein at least some of the edge super pixels of a module are inactive or dark;

FIG. 8A is a close-up view of portions of two adjacent modules illustrating dark edge super pixels that reside adjacent the seam formed by the two adjacent modules, wherein the edge OLEDs in the edge super pixels are dark;

FIG. 8B is similar to FIG. 8A and illustrates an example wherein all of the edge OLEDs (i.e., edge sub-pixels) in each super pixel in the module are dark;

FIG. 9A is a front-on schematic diagram of an example module having a 64×48 OLED matrix of OLEDs, with the OLEDs arranged in 4×4 super pixels, so that the module has 16×12 super pixels; and

FIG. 9B is similar to FIG. 8A and shows a close-up view of portions of two adjacent modules, wherein the edge pixels of each module that reside adjacent the seam are inactive and are not part of any of the super pixels.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference is now made in detail to various embodiments of the disclosure, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Whenever possible, the same or like reference numbers and symbols are used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, and one skilled in the art will recognize where the drawings have been simplified to illustrate the key aspects of the disclosure.

The claims as set forth below are incorporated into and constitute a part of this Detailed Description.

Cartesian coordinates are shown in some of the Figures for the sake of reference and are not intended to be limiting as to direction or orientation.

In the discussion below, an A×B array of elements has A elements in the x-direction and B elements in the y-direction, wherein the x-direction represents the horizontal direction and the y-direction represents the vertical direction unless noted otherwise.

Also in the discussion below, a “module” is a display that in an example is configured such that it can be used to form a larger display by the combination of two or more modules, such as by operably supporting one or more modules using one or more panels. Examples of large-format displays that utilize display modules supported by panels are described in U.S. Pat. No. 7,654,878 and in U.S. Pat. No. 6,870,519.

In addition, in the discussion below, the term “sub-pixel” refers to an OLED that constitutes part of a super pixel. An edge sub-pixel is a sub-pixel that resides at the edge of the super pixel.

OLED Display System

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram of an example OLED display system 50 that includes a large-format OLED-based display assembly (“OLED display”) 260, which is described in greater detail below. The OLED display 260 has dimensions Dx and Dy. In an example, the dimension Dx can be many feet, e.g., greater than 2 feet or greater than 10 feet or even greater than 50 feet. The dimension Dy can have corresponding values consistent with the desired aspect ratio of OLED display 260. In the example shown, a cameraman 50 with a camera 52 records a video image of people 54 dancing, and the video image is relayed to OLED display 260 using conventional means to form an OLED display image 56.

In an example, OLED display 260 is made up of a number of display panels (“panels”) 70, such as the 6×5 array of panels shown by way of example. Each display panel 70 has

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dimensions d1x×d1y. In an example, the dimension d1x can range from 450 to 500 mm and the dimension d1y can range from 250 to 300 mm. In an example, each panel 70 can be made up of a number of display assemblies or “modules” 80, such as the 3×4 array of display modules shown. Each module 80 has dimensions d2x×d2y. In an example, the dimension d2x can range from 100 to 150 mm and the dimension d2y can range from 80 to 120 mm.

FIG. 2A is a schematic diagram of an example module 80 that shows in the close-up inset a portion of an OLED drive circuit 250 as disclosed herein and as discussed in greater detail below. FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional view of the example module 80 of FIG. 2A. The module 80 has an upper surface 81, an edge 82, and a lower surface 83. In an example, module 80 is rectangular as shown and edge 82 is constituted by four edges 82a, 82b, 82c and 82d. The OLED drive circuit 250 includes a circuit controller 254 (e.g., a microcontroller) and a matrix 100M of OLEDs 100, each of which has a central light-emitting portion 102, as shown in the lowermost close-up inset in FIG. 1. Other electronic components known in the art, such as column registers, shift registers, etc. can be included in OLED drive circuit 250 but are not shown for ease of illustration. The OLED drive circuit 250 includes rows r and columns c that represent an x-y grid of electrical connections that electrically connect OLEDs 100 in OLED matrix 100M in a select manner as discussed below.

FIG. 2B shows an example wherein circuit controller 254 is electrically connected to row-and-column electrical connections r and c via lower surface 83 of module 80 using a ball-grid-array (BGA) structure 256.

In an example, OLEDs 100 have a center-to-center spacing s, which is typically in the range from just over 0.25 mm (e.g., 0.625 mm) to 3.5 mm. In an example, OLEDs 100 can emit light at one of a number of different wavelengths, such as red (R), green (G), blue (B), white (W), yellow (Y), orange (O), cyan (C), magenta (M) and other colors used in color displays. In some of the discussion below, OLEDs 100 are assumed to emit a single color of light so that OLED display 260 is monochromatic, for ease of illustration and discussion of the super-pixel configurations disclosed herein. Example embodiments of a color OLED display 260 that utilize the super-pixel configurations and OLED drive circuits 250 disclosed herein are also discussed below. In an example, OLED display 260 is configured to have high definition.

An advantage of using OLEDs 100 in module 80 is that they allow for electrical connections to be made from the back of the module (see FIG. 2B) rather than from the sides, as is done for liquid crystal display (LCD) panels. This means that the size of an optional bezel (not shown) on the upper surface 81 of module 80 can be reduced significantly as compared to that needed for an LCD panel because the bezel for the module would be used only for sealing OLEDs 100 from the surroundings and not for hiding electrical interconnects. This allows for modules 80 to be smaller than LCD panels while also reducing adverse effects of the bezels that arise between adjacent modules (e.g., so-called bezel or seam effects).

Conventional OLED Display

FIG. 3 is a schematic circuit diagram of a conventional (prior art) OLED drive circuit 150 as part of a conventional OLED display 160. The OLED drive circuit 150 has a common-anode circuit configuration that allows for activating OLEDs 100 individually (i.e., the OLEDs are independently addressable). The OLED drive circuit 150 can also have a common cathode configuration, as is known in the

art. In the example shown, OLED display **160** has eight columns and six rows of OLEDs **100** (i.e., is an 8×6 display), for a total of 48 OLEDs that define OLED matrix **100M**. FIG. **3** includes numbers in italics that denote the matrix position (row and column) of OLEDs **100**, e.g., **11** indicates the OLED in the first row, first column in the array, while **46** indicates the OLED in the fourth row, sixth column in OLED matrix **100M**. Advantages of the common-anode configuration as compared to the common-cathode configuration include that for the former, the circuitry becomes more independent of the drive voltage. In the case of the common-cathode configuration, the drive voltage variations can have an effect on the current flowing through an OLED **100** and hence have an impact on the light output. In the common-anode configuration, the reference is ground G, which is by definition much more stable.

Commercially available displays can have many thousands of individual OLEDs **100**, which are available in different formats, colors, sizes and other attributes. Each OLED **100** has a cathode **102** and an anode **104**. The OLED drive circuit **150** includes an x-y grid of conductive lines or wires represented by columns *c* (e.g., **c1** through **c8**) and rows *r* (e.g., **r1** through **r8**). The cathode **102** and anode **104** of each OLED **100** is respectively electrically connected to a given row *r* and a given column *c*.

The OLED drive circuit **150** also includes current sinks CS (e.g., **CS1** through **CS8**) arranged at an end of the respective columns *c* (e.g., columns **C1** through **C8**), followed by ground switches SG (e.g., switches **SG1** through **SG8**). Each row *r* includes a (row) switch SR (e.g., switches **SR1** through **SR6**). The OLED drive circuit **150** also includes bank voltage inputs VB (e.g., **VB1**, **VB2**, . . . **VB6**) for rows *r*. The bank voltage inputs VB reside adjacent switches SR.

Each OLED **100** emits light when a current passes from its anode **104** to its cathode **102**. As an OLED **100** is a current-sensitive device, the current needs to be controlled to get the light output required without damaging the device. In an example, an OLED **100** and a current-limiting device such as a resistor (not shown) can be placed in a series circuit configuration. A voltage of higher potential is applied to the circuit closest to anode **104** and the other end of the series circuit is connected to a lower voltage potential. The difference in the voltage potential has to be high enough to overcome the threshold voltage of OLED **100**. By adjusting either the resistance in series with OLED **100** or the voltage applied across the OLED and the resistor, the current can be set to generate the required light output for the given application.

For many designs, the lower voltage potential is set at ground level and the higher potential is a positive power supply. Instead of a simple resistor, current sinks CS are used, as shown in FIG. **3**. The current sinks CS are well known to practitioners in the electrical arts and use an active circuit to control the current flowing through the branch. In this manner, the operation is less sensitive to changes in supply voltage or changes in OLEDs **100**.

With continuing reference to FIG. **3** and as noted above, OLED drive circuit **150** is configured such that each OLED **100** in OLED matrix **100M** can be activated individually. For example, to activate OLED **100** at position **11**, a positive voltage is applied to voltage input **VB1**, a ground potential (i.e., ground G) is connected to current sink **CS1**, switch **SR1** is turned on (i.e., is closed) and switch **SG1** is also turned on. This causes current to flow from the positive voltage at **VB1**, through switch **SR1**, through OLED **100** at position **11**,

through current sink **CS1**, through switch **SG1** and then to ground G, as indicated by the leftmost arrow AR.

Multiple OLEDs **100** in the same row *r* can be activated at the same time. While switch **SR1** is active, any or all of the switches **SG1** through **SG8** can be activated. In this manner, the entire OLED display **160** can be activated one row *r* at a time by activating switches **SR1** through **SR6** one at a time while activating switches **SG1** through **SG8** such that OLEDs **100** are selectively illuminated. It is noted that multiple rows *r* cannot be activated at the same time since the current sinks **CS1** through **CS8** have been set to the current required by a single OLED **100**. If two rows *r* of OLEDs **100** were activated, the current to those OLEDs in the activated columns *c* would be half of that required to activate OLEDs in a single row. This would reduce the amount of light emitted from OLEDs **100**.

OLED Display with Super Pixels

FIG. **4A** is a schematic diagram of OLED drive circuit **250** as part of OLED display **260** as disclosed herein. The OLED drive circuit **250** has a modified common-anode circuit configuration. In another embodiment not shown, the OLED drive circuit **250** can have an analogous modified common-cathode configuration. The common-anode configuration has some advantages as described above and so is shown and discussed herein by way of illustration.

The OLED display **260** includes an 8×6 matrix **100M** of OLEDs **100**, with the dashed lines indicating groupings of adjacent OLEDs and with each grouping defining what is referred to herein a “super pixel” **300**, wherein each OLED **100** in given super pixel constitutes a sub-pixel for that super pixel. The example OLED drive circuit **250** has a common-anode configuration but has half the number of switches SG and SR and half the number of current sinks CS.

The electrical connections or wires defined by rows *r* and columns *c* are arranged so that OLEDs **100** in each super pixel **300** can only be activated together, i.e., the OLEDs are no longer individually addressable. In the example OLED drive circuit **250** of FIG. **4A**, rows **r1** and **r2** are electrically connected, rows **r3** and **r4** are electrically connected and rows **r5** and **r6** are electrically connected. Similarly, columns **c1** and **c2** are electrically connected, columns **c3** and **c4** are electrically connected, columns **c5** and **c6** are electrically connected, and columns **c7** and **c8** are electrically connected.

With this configuration for OLED drive circuit **250**, OLEDs **100** at positions **11**, **12**, **21** and **22** are now connected in an electrically parallel fashion and are activated together rather than individually. These four OLEDs **100**, which can be denoted as a set or group of OLEDs {**11**, **12**, **21**, **22**}, now form a super pixel **300**. Thus, the twelve super pixels **300** that define the 4×3 arrangement of the OLED display **260** of FIG. **3** are defined by the following sets or groups of OLEDs or sub-pixels: {**11**, **12**, **21**, **22**}, {**13**, **14**, **23**, **24**}, {**15**, **16**, **25**, **26**}, {**17**, **18**, **27**, **28**}, {**31**, **32**, **41**, **42**}, {**33**, **34**, **43**, **44**}, {**35**, **36**, **45**, **46**}, {**37**, **38**, **47**, **48**}, {**51**, **52**, **61**, **62**}, {**53**, **54**, **63**, **64**}, {**55**, **56**, **65**, **66**} and {**57**, **58**, **67**, **68**}.

The super pixels **300** of OLED display **260** of FIG. **4A** are four times larger than the OLED pixels of the conventional OLED display **160** of FIG. **3**. In an example, each OLED **100** (sub-pixel) in a given super pixel **300** can have substantially similar electrical and visual characteristics (e.g., a substantially similar emission wavelength) and share current when connected in a parallel fashion. In another example, OLEDs **100** in a given super pixel **300** can have at least one substantially different characteristic, such as different emission wavelengths.

With the super-pixel configuration for OLED matrix **100M** of OLED display **260**, the number of active electrical components in OLED drive circuit **250** is reduced as compared to the prior art OLED drive circuit **150** of FIG. 3. In the example shown in FIG. 4A, the OLED drive circuit **250** has gone from six switches SR for the positive supply to three, eight current sinks CS to four and eight ground switches SG to four. Overall, the number of active control elements has been reduced from twenty two to eleven. This reduction in active control elements scales with the size of OLED display **260**.

Generally speaking, for a conventional OLED display **160** that includes $p \times q$ OLEDs **100** as pixels such as shown in FIG. 3, the "conventional" number N_C of active electrical components is given by $N_C = 2p + q$. Thus, for the example OLED display **150** of FIG. 3, $p = 8$ and $q = 6$, so that $N_C = 2(8) + 6 = 22$. For an OLED display **260** that includes $m \times n$ super pixels **300**, the number N_{SP} of active electrical components is $N_{SP} = 2m + n$, which in the 4×3 example of FIG. 4A is $N_{SP} = 2(4) + 3 = 11$. The reduction or change Δ in the number of active electrical components is given by $\Delta = N_C - N_{SP}$, which is for the present example, $\Delta = 11$, which represents a 50% reduction in the number of active electrical components.

Because each activated super pixel **300** in the example OLED matrix **100M** of FIG. 4A is four times as large as an individual OLED pixel, the capacity of the positive switches SR, current sinks CS and ground switches SG all need to handle four times the amount of current. However, the active control elements can be judiciously selected so that the scaling of the power capacity is not a substantial cost factor.

FIG. 4B is similar to FIG. 4A and illustrates another example of OLED drive circuit **250** and OLED display **260**, wherein super pixels **300** contain 8×2 OLEDs **100**. In this case, rows **r1** and **r2** are electrically connected, rows **r3** and **r4** are electrically connected and rows **r5** and **r6** are electrically connected, while columns **c1**, **c2** and **c3** are electrically connected and columns **c4**, **c5** and **c6** are electrically connected. In this manner, the six super pixels **300** are defined by the following groups or sets of OLEDs **100** or sub-pixels: {11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, 24}, {15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28}, {31, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, 43, 44}, {35, 36, 37, 38, 45, 46, 47, 48}, {51, 52, 53, 54, 61, 62, 63, 64}, {55, 56, 57, 58, 65, 66, 67, 68}. These sets of OLEDs **100** are now connected in an electrically parallel fashion and are activated together, thus defining six super pixels **300** having a 2×3 arrangement.

The number of active electrical components for the example of FIG. 4B is given by $N_{SP} = 2n + m = 2(2) + 3 = 7$, so that the reduction in the number of active electrical components is $\Delta = 22 - 7 = 15$, or about a 68% reduction.

Because each super pixel **300** in the example of FIG. 4B is eight times as large as an individual sub-pixel defined by OLED **100**, the capacity of the positive switches SR, current sinks CS and ground switches SG all have to handle eight (8) times the amount of current. As noted above in connection with FIG. 3, the active control elements can be judiciously selected so that the scaling of the power capacity is not a substantial cost factor.

In general, OLED drive circuit **250** as disclosed herein is configured to define super pixels **300** that consist of $i \times j$ OLEDs **100** by electrically connecting i adjacent columns and j adjacent rows for each super pixel. Any reasonable number of OLEDs **100** can be used to constitute a super pixel **300**, and in an example the smallest super pixels can be 2×2 . In an example, the size of super pixels **300** is selected based on OLED display **260** having high-definition resolution. An example high-resolution OLED display **260**

can have for example 1280×720 super pixels **300** or 1920×1080 super pixels, as defined by OLED drive circuit **250** disclosed herein.

FIG. 5 is a close-up view of a portion of an example module **80** wherein each super pixel **300** includes red (R), green (G) and blue (B) OLEDs **100** so that the super pixels are color pixels and OLED display **260** is a color display. The super pixels **300** can other colors as well, such as those mentioned above

Modules with Color Super Pixels

FIG. 6A is an elevated exploded view of an example color module **80C** that shows R, G and B monochrome modules **80R**, **80G** and **80B** arranged in a layered configuration. The R, G and B monochrome modules **80R**, **80G** and **80B** respectively include R, G and B OLEDs **100**, denoted **100R**, **100G** and **100B**, respectively. Other colors for the monochrome modules **80** can be used (e.g., white W, yellow Y, orange O, cyan C and magenta M) and the R, G and B colors are selected here merely for the sake of illustration and because R, G and B are common display colors.

The R, G and B monochrome OLED displays **260R**, **260G** and **260B** include respective super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B**, which are respectively made up of OLEDs **100R**, **100G** and **100B**. In the example shown in FIG. 6A, super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** are each 4×3 , as illustrated in the close-up insets.

It can be noted that R, G and B super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** need not be activated at the same time. In an example, one of the super pixels **300**, such as the red super pixels **300R**, can be driven all in parallel, while the other super pixels, such as the G and B super pixels **300G** and **300B**, can be driven individually. In one example, the R, G and B super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** are activated at the same time, i.e., are driven simultaneously.

FIG. 6B is a close-up cross-sectional view of a portion of the example color module **80C** of FIG. 6A. The layered configuration is made possible by the fact that the individual monochrome modules **80R**, **80G** and **80B** are substantially transparent. The OLED displays **260** are formed using a screened electronics process wherein the individual OLEDs can have nearly identical light output characteristics given the same electrical stimulus. The OLED displays **260** are commercially available in different resolutions, colors, and sizes and with other features, depending on the needs of the final application.

The monochrome red, green and blue modules **80R**, **80G** and **80B** are configured so that the respective super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** emit R, G and B light generally in the z-direction through an upper surface **81C** of color module **80C**. In an example, super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** are offset in the x-y plane as shown. In an example, triplets of super pixels **300R**, **300G** and **300B** define color super pixels **300C**. FIG. 6C is an elevated, exploded view of an example color super pixel **300C** of color module **80C**.

OLED Display with Dark Super Pixels or Dark OLEDs

FIG. 7A is a front-on view of an example module **80** made up of 234 super pixels **300** in an 18×13 configuration. The module **80** includes outer edges **82a**, **82b**, **82c** and **82d** at which reside edge super pixels **300e**, respectively denoted **300ea**, **300eb**, **300ec** and **300ed**. FIG. 7B is similar to FIG. 7A and shows edge super pixels **300e** as inactive or dark super pixels. FIG. 7C shows an example panel **70** made up of modules **80** of FIG. 7B having dark edge pixels **300ea**, **300eb**, **300ec** and **300ed**. FIG. 7D is similar to FIG. 7C and shows an example where for adjacent modules **80**, only one row and/or column of edge super pixels **300e** are dark super pixels.

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FIG. 8A is a close-up, front-on view of an example panel 70 that shows two adjacent modules 80 and a seam 84 that resides between the modules. The modules 80 each include super pixels 300 in a 4x3 configuration. In FIG. 8A, only edge super pixels 300e are shown for ease of illustration. In the example panel 70, for the edge super pixels 300ec and 300ea that define seam 84, the most edgewise OLEDs 100 in the edge super pixels are inactive or dark super pixels. Thus, rather than having all of OLEDs 100 of edge super pixel 300e being dark (so that the entire edge super pixel is dark), only the edge OLEDs, denoted 100ec and 100ea, are dark or inactive. Note that this same technique can be used for seams 84 that are horizontal, with the corresponding edge OLEDs 100ed and 100eb being inactive.

FIG. 8B is similar to FIG. 8A and illustrates an example wherein all of the edge OLEDs 100e of each edge super pixel 300e are dark. In an example, some or all of the super pixels 300 in each module 80 and not just the edge super pixels 300e have all of their edge OLEDs 100e being dark. Two non-edge super pixels 300 are shown in FIG. 8B by way of illustration. In general, a large number of configurations are available for each module 80 wherein one or more of the super pixels 300 have some or all of their edge OLEDs 100e as being dark

The inactive or dark edge OLEDs 100e can be formed by not connecting the OLEDs to a row r or column c in OLED drive circuit 250. In another example, the inactive or dark edge OLEDs 100e can be formed by having them electrically connected with the rows r and columns c but programming circuit controller 254 to recognize the edge OLEDs and to provide a bank voltage VB suitable for preventing select edge OLEDs from emitting light (e.g., holding the bank voltage VB high to prevent current flow through the edge OLED). In a similar manner, entire edge super pixels 300e of a given module 80 can be made dark by programming circuit controller 254 to selectively activate only those super pixels 300 that do not reside next to super pixels of an adjacent module. In the case of FIG. 7D, circuit controller 254 can be programmed to ensure that only one column c or row r of edge super pixels 300e that reside adjacent seam 84 are inactive.

FIG. 9A is a front-on schematic diagram of an example module 80 having a 64x48 OLED matrix 100M of OLEDs 100, with 4x4 super pixels 300, so that the module has 16x12 super pixels. The module 80 includes edge OLEDs 100e or edge sub-pixels (i.e., 100ea, 100eb, 100ec and 100ed) that are inactive or dark and that do not belong to any of super pixels 300. An example module 80 has at least one of edge OLEDs 100ea, 100eb, 100ec and 100ed as dark or inactive edge OLEDs (i.e., the module has one or more dark edges 82a, 82b, 82c and 82d).

FIG. 9B is a close-up view of portions of two adjacent modules 80 wherein edge OLEDs 100ec of the left-side module and edge OLEDs 100ea of the right-side module are inactive or dark, and wherein both of these edge OLEDs do not belong to any of super pixels 300. In an example, the dark edge OLEDs 100e are dark or inactive by virtue of not being electrically connected to OLED drive circuit 250.

One reason for having dark edge pixels 300e is to improve the overall resolution of OLED display 260. Typically, modules 80 that make up OLED display 260 are formed on a glass substrate. In some examples, the thickness of the glass substrate creates illumination issues at seams 84 between adjacent modules 80 that give rise to undesirable visual effects when a display image is viewed. Consequently, it can be advantageous to have no light emission

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from either edge super pixels 300e or edge OLEDs 100e at seam 84 or the interface between adjacent modules 80.

It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications to the preferred embodiments of the disclosure as described herein can be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the disclosure as defined in the appended claims. Thus, the disclosure covers the modifications and variations provided they come within the scope of the appended claims and the equivalents thereto.

What is claimed is:

1. An organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display module, comprising:

a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode; and

an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix,

wherein groups of i adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of j adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an i x j array of OLEDs, wherein i and j are integers equal to or greater than 2, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated, and

wherein some of the super pixels are edge super pixels, and wherein the display module does not emit light visible to an observer from regions where at least some of the edge super pixels are located.

2. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein the OLED display module includes n rows and k columns of super pixels, wherein n and k are integers, further wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-anode configuration, including only k current sinks and only k column switches, with each super pixel column including one of the current sinks and one of the column switches, and the OLED drive circuit including only n voltage inputs and only n row switches with each super pixel row including one of the voltage inputs and one of the row switches.

3. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein the OLEDs in the matrix of OLEDs emit light of substantially the same wavelength.

4. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein OLEDs within one of the super pixels emit a different color of light than other OLEDs within the same super pixel.

5. The OLED display module according to claim 4, wherein at least one OLED within the super pixel emits red light, at least one OLED within the super pixel emits green light and at least one OLED within the super pixel emits blue light.

6. The OLED display module according to claim 4, wherein the colors of light emitted by OLEDs within the super pixel include two or more of red, green, blue, yellow, white, orange, magenta or cyan.

7. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein some of the super pixels are edge super pixels, and wherein at least some of the edge super pixels are inactive.

8. The OLED display module according claim 1, wherein some of the super pixels have edge sub-pixels, and wherein one or more of the edge sub-pixels are inactive.

9. The OLED display module according claim 8, wherein each of the edge sub-pixels in each super pixel is inactive.

10. The OLED display module according to claim 1, further including a circuit controller electrically connected to the rows and columns.

11. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein the circuit controller is electrically connected to the rows and columns via a ball-grid-array (BGA) structure.

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12. The OLED display module according to claim 1, wherein the OLED display module includes a plurality of monochrome modules arranged in a layered configuration, at least one of the monochrome modules configured to emit a different color of light than another one of the monochrome modules, further wherein each of the monochrome modules includes at least one of the matrix of OLEDs defining super pixels, wherein the OLEDs in at least one super pixel in at least one monochrome module cannot be individually activated.

13. An organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display module, comprising:

a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode, wherein some of the OLEDs constitute edge OLEDs;

an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix wherein at least some of the edge OLEDs are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit,

wherein groups of adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an array of at least four OLEDs, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated, and

wherein the OLED display module includes n rows and k columns of super pixels, wherein n and k are integers, further wherein the OLED drive circuit includes only n row switches and only k column switches, each super pixel row including one of the row switches and each super pixel column including one of the column switches.

14. The OLED display module according to claim 13, further wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-anode configuration, including only k current sinks, and only n voltage inputs, each super pixel column including one of the current sinks and one of the column switches and each super pixel row including one of the voltage inputs and one of the row switches.

15. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein the OLED drive circuit has a common-cathode configuration.

16. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein all of the edge OLEDs are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit and are not included in any of the super pixels.

17. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein the module includes four edges, and wherein all of the edge OLEDs that reside along at least one of the four edges of the module are not electrically connected to the OLED drive circuit.

18. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein OLEDs within one of the super pixels emits a different color of light than other OLEDs within the super pixel.

19. The OLED display module according to claim 18, wherein colors of light emitted by OLEDs within the super pixel include two or more of red, green, blue, yellow, white, orange, magenta and cyan.

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20. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein each super pixel includes edge sub pixels, and wherein at least some of the edge sub pixels in each super pixel are inactive.

21. The OLED display module according to claim 20, wherein all of the edge sub pixels in each super pixel are inactive.

22. The OLED display module according to claim 13, wherein the module is a color module including a plurality of monochrome modules arranged in a layered configuration, at least one of the monochrome modules configured to emit a different color of light than another one of the monochrome modules, wherein each of the monochrome modules includes one of the matrix of OLEDs defining super pixels, wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel in a given monochrome module cannot be individually activated.

23. An organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display module, comprising:

a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode ; and

an OLED drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix,

wherein groups of i adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of j adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an i x j array of OLEDs, wherein i and j are integers equal to or greater than 2, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated, and

wherein some of the super pixels have edge sub-pixels, and wherein the display module does not emit light visible to an observer from regions where one or more of the edge sub-pixels are located.

24. An organic light-emitting diode (OLED) display module, comprising:

a matrix of OLEDs, with each OLED having an anode and a cathode; and

an OLD drive circuit having electrical connections defined by rows and columns that electrically connect to the OLEDs in the OLED matrix,

wherein groups of i adjacent rows are arranged in parallel and wherein groups of j adjacent columns are arranged in parallel, thereby defining super pixels each having an i x j array of OLEDs, wherein i and j are integers equal to or greater than 2, and wherein the OLEDs in a given super pixel cannot be individually activated,

wherein some of the super pixels are edge super pixels, and wherein the display module does not emit light visible to an observer from regions where at least some of the edge super pixels are located, and

wherein the OLED display module includes n rows and k columns of super pixels, wherein n and k are integers, further wherein the OLED drive circuit includes only n row switches and only k column switches, each super pixel row including one of the row switches and each super pixel column including one of the column switches.

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